

CREATING THE 21ST CENTURY WORKFORCE: DEVELOPING COORDINATED REGIONAL STRATEGIES

West Michigan Regional Planning Initiative

The necessity for Michigan to transform its thinking and approach to workforce and economic development has rarely been more apparent than it is as we seek to compete in the global market. The challenge is vast, and the collaborative participation of government, education, business and community leaders in creating an innovative environment for this opportunity for transformation is essential to positively impacting our region. Flexibility and enabling adjustment of previous thought and approach, is key as we engage in this opportunity to adopt innovative strategies to address our current workforce and economic goals. These goals include prevention of Michigan's manufacturing industry and jobs leaving the state through lay-off aversion plans, support of the linking of workforce and economic development through community led efforts to address plant closings and lay-offs, and the creation of successful transition pathways to new skills, jobs and new markets through strongly defined and communicated strategies developed by workforce development teams. Adjusted ways of thinking, communicating and collaborating, are what the West Michigan regional plan seeks to facilitate, with the overall goal of effectively communicating and addressing the root needs of our workforce in order for Michigan to realistically and effectively compete on a global scale.

With this in mind and under the Creating the 21st Century Workforce Initiative, strategies to address the following *Elements of the Regional Plan* were considered:

1. *Create a unified local approach to working with employers*
2. *Assess the local workforce and economy*
3. *Develop a coordinated regionally led Rapid Response process and incorporate a lay-off aversion component*
4. *Implement a new skills information model to develop accelerated training programs*
5. *Develop, attract and retain talent to build and support the 21st Century Economy*
6. *Develop and implement a communications strategy targeted at partners, employers and the general public*

In the convening to address strategies for implementing these elements, a two phased approach was determined for the West Michigan region to address the short and long term aspects of the plan. Integral to the strategies for both phases, was connectivity to the WIRED initiative for shared resources, research, learning and alignment.

Element 1: *Create a unified local approach to working with employers*

Relationship is the core to success and a foundation of trust is essential to engaging community stakeholders. Keeping relationship at the core, the approach will be comprised as follows:

Key Partners:

- Leadership Team: Champion representatives from the three Michigan Works! Agencies (MWA), Department of Human Services (DHS), and Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). (*Appendix A*)
- Regional Workforce Development Specialist (TBD)
- WIRED West Michigan Innovation Teams: WM TEAM, WorkKeys®, Innovation Curriculum
- Other Regional Representatives as Resource Referrals (*Regional Chambers, Right Place, Muskegon First etc.*)

Strategies & Activities:

- Continue to develop Full Leadership Team
- Develop full Cross Training Curriculum to align workforce development and economic development approaches to working with employers; playing to core competency of agencies.
- Establish a Regional Workforce Development Specialist to implement:
 - Cross training curriculum
 - Quarterly meetings between Workforce Development and Economic Development
 - Staff exchange days for 5 county best practice sharing
 - Annual/Bi-annual regional meetings between Workforce Development and Economic Development
 - Regional NAWB training sessions: ½ day “Building Partnerships” training; ½ day “Becoming a Catalyst for Change” training.
- Erin Kauth, MWA representative and Nancy Manglos, Economic Development representative will attend “Business Solutions Professional Certification Training” as representatives of the region and implement strategies learned on a broader scale within the region.
- Identify single point of contact per MWA for business to contact and develop a method to track and share contacts and provide comprehensive, up to date information on resources and services for business. This single point focus for business to engage with includes:
 - Implementation of MiOps protocol for information sharing
 - Shared information on individual MWA! protocols for partner referrals
 - Development and implementation of unified plan for communicating with business

Responsibilities:

Leadership Team Members:

Are responsible for development of the full cross training curriculum with an initial focus on inter-agency aligning of philosophy and education regarding services through the training, meeting and best practice sharing opportunities outlined above. The development will then extend to communication regarding services and resources to employer and community stakeholders through a structured single point of focus approach. They will ensure the correct resources and partnerships are imbedded into the development and implementation of the cross training curriculum in order to provide connection with and continuity between workforce and economic development initiatives.

The Leadership team is responsible for alignment of services and resources by taking a proactive rather than reactive approach, of competencies of each agency (SWOT-Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), and of leveraging of funds and revenue sharing across agencies and across boundaries, acknowledging the difference between economic and political boundaries. As effective alignment of core competencies is embedded in to the cross training curriculum, they will continue activate revenue, staff and resource connections to activate all aspects of the strategy.

Regional Work Force Development Specialist: (under consideration)

Supported by the three MWA's will assist in implementation of aspects of the cross training curriculum, providing continuity of single focus among agencies, thus, helping to ensure continuity and strength of the curriculum.

WIRED West Michigan Innovations: WM TEAM, WorkKeys® & Innovation Curriculum:

Will, as invited by the Leadership Team, share information on resources, programs, collaborative and training opportunities for partnership in addressing specific workforce and economic development needs.

Other Regional Representatives:

Will continue to be approached for and provide input and informational assistance as strategy requires

Milestones & Timeframe:

See Project Timeline (Appendix B)

Status Notes:

- Whilst Ottawa County takes the lead on implementing aspects of the training curriculum strategy, other Leadership Team members continue to be identified and sought for a unified regional approach.

- Connectivity with WIRED innovations, in particular WM TEAM and Innovation Curriculum regarding collaboration in programs and training continues to expand and further opportunity is being considered.
- Opportunity for presentation to Workforce Development Boards etc. is being planned and a workshop date regarding Innovation Curriculum aimed at employers is being considered.
- Information has been gathered regarding bringing Regional NAWB training session to the region, Ottawa County MWA! representative Erin Kauth has reserved two seats - one for MWA! Representative and the other for an Economic Developer to attend the "Business solutions Professional Certification" training offered by South Central Michigan Works starting in September 2007. Regional MEDC representative, Karen Hinkle, is participating in the training currently.

Element 2: *Assess the local workforce and economy*

Key Partners:

- Leadership Team (Appendix A)
- Regional Workforce and Economic Development Specialist
- WIRED West Michigan Innovation Teams: including WM TEAM, WorkKeys®, Innovation Curriculum
- Additional Regional Economic Development Specialists
- DLEG Labor Market Analyst assigned to Region #5 (Bruce Weaver)

Strategies & Activities:

- Collaborative use of Asset Map developed for West Michigan under WIRED:
 - Provide Stakeholders with Asset Map and have them train their staff locally
- Engage Labor Market Analyst to perform Workforce analysis
- Utilize seat license granted by WIRED West Michigan for the WITS (Workforce & Innovation Technical Solution) to generate reports and analysis of the region
- Compile and share information regionally
- Establish standardized alignment with workforce development assessment suites being utilized Under WIRED.
 - WorkKeys® as initial assessment tool
 - WM TEAM comprehensive assessment suite as developed

Responsibilities:

Leadership Team:

Are responsible for collating and disseminating information gathered through assessments and for researching and implementing utilization of the WIRED West Michigan Asset Map. They hold overall responsibility for establishing the unified approach to proactively responding to assessment information overseeing the aligning of services and resources to address needs and or gaps identified and for, with that information, developing and implementing a regionally enhanced skills information model.

Leadership Team supporting WIRED West Michigan Innovation: WM TEAM and WorkKeys®:

Will collaborate regarding the standardization of an assessment suite to provide alignment of workforce and economic development contacts within business and help to assure the same needs are being recognized and addressed for employers. WorkKeys® will provide the initial tool for assessment which will aid in quantifying talent through the measurement of skill, and provide a pathway for additional training. WM TEAM will collaborate as they establish a comprehensive assessment suite for standardized implementation and alignment

Labor Market Analyst and DLEG representatives:

Will assist with analysis of local and regional workforce and economy and with compilation of information in a format which can be effectively comprehended by business and laymen.

Milestones & Timeframe:

See Project Timeline (Appendix B)

Status Notes:

- Obtain copy of WIRED West Michigan Asset Map
- Collaboration with WIRED Innovations: WorkKeys® and WM TEAM regarding standardized assessment continues to be developed and expanded as opportunity for alignment increases. Conversation with WM TEAM specifically regarding support of development of a comprehensive assessment suite is in the planning stage.

Element 3: Help redefine the Regional Rapid Response model involving coordinated activities to address layoff response, prevention, and build business competitiveness

Under the program, cross training curriculum, three key areas have been identified for a long term solution focus. By using economic development business enhancement services as an environment in which the foundation for partnering with employers is solidified, the stage for successful partnership in addressing actual business issues will be built. Developing a solution driven model for long term focus is what will begin to transform current approaches to addressing issues and gaps in the system. The three key areas identified for this solution driven approach are Business Enhancement Services, Lay-Off Aversion and Regional Rapid Response.

Key Partners:

- Leadership Team (Appendix A)
- Mary Kay Schoon, Erin Kenny & Maureen Downer (Ottawa, Muskegon & Kent Co. MWA!)
- Lloyd Conway (DLEG)
- Unemployment Agency Representative
- Rapid Response Core Teams

Strategies & Activities:

- Targeted information sharing with employers through proactive in-reach opportunities (Stakeholder Best Practice meetings, communications flow chart and website).
- Train Staff in GLTAAC and MMTC provision areas and communicate resource to employers
- Utilize MMTC Performance Benchmarking Questionnaire Tool
- Implement Rapid Response Protocol developed by Mary Kay Schoon, Erin Kenny and Maureen Downer
- Communicate and implement Rapid Response Script which is developed
- Utilize state Rapid Response database and communicate protocols regionally
- Develop informational and resource materials to leave with employers
- Identify additional Rapid Response Core Teams & hold learning and development forums

Responsibilities:

Leadership Team:

Are responsible for targeted information sharing/communications as previously outlined to build trust and relationship with employers providing opportunity to address issues before they reach a critical point. They will coordinate with DLEG information and assistance and WIRED workforce system transformation findings, be responsible for providing well versed training on GLTAAC and MMTC provisions as well as overseeing regional distribution of protocols and scripts. This coordinated pathway would result in the ability for an employer to diagnose their workforce/ economic health in the region through access to data indicating regional trends etc, communicate problems through the program point of contact who can then assist with assessment, identifying training needs to adjust with the region and identifying and accessing resources to assist with addressing risk factors.

Mary Kay Schoon, Erin Kenny & Maureen Downer (Ottawa, Muskegon & Kent Co. MWA!), Lloyd Conway (DLEG) Unemployment Agency Representative:

In connection with the States Rapid Response Plan, will provide their specific rapid response scripts and protocol for utilization and communication and will assist with development of materials to leave with employers. They will assist with learning and development forums for additional Rapid Response core teams.

Rapid Response Core Teams:

Are responsible to stay up to date with the “Speakers Bureau” to provide consistency in policy and action and to present services and resources such as WorkKeys® assessment and training linking with JAC and to the WIRED innovations for assistance in transferring skills to develop career pathways in alternate industries. They will assist with providing on site rapid response skills assessment units implemented for triage.

Milestones & Timeframe:

See Project Timeline (Appendix B)

Status Notes:

- Rapid Response Protocol has been developed by initial core team, Mary Kay Schoon, Erin Kenny and Maureen Downer and planning for material development and regional communication is underway.
- Research has begun to provide comprehensive understanding of GLTAAC and MMTC provisions and tools for businesses.
- Conversations with WIRED Innovations (WorkKeys®, WM TEAM, Innovation Curriculum) regarding connectivity to programming and development opportunities continue to grow.

Element 4: *Implement a new Skills Information Model to develop accelerated training programs*

Sector Mapping will be used to identify the key players in the region who are able to contribute to the initiative. This tool will be used to discover potential partners, share processes, and outline strategies in a fluid manner to address the unique characteristics of the region. Region #5 is located in the West Central Michigan Regional Skill Alliance (RSA). This initiative provides a framework to organize the workforce development needs of the West Central Michigan business community in the Health Care industry cluster. The RSA is a business-driven, business-focused partnership whose primary goal is to provide Michigan businesses with a highly skilled workforce and connect individuals to good jobs with opportunities for career advancement. The West Central RSA has developed and implemented accelerated training programs for the Health Care field and in an effort to maximize resources and eliminate duplication, the members from the Leadership Team will serve or connect to the RSA Board of Directors.

Key Partners:

Leadership Team (Appendix A)

Bruce Weaver, DLEG Labor Market Analyst

Sue Schaible, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth (RSA)

RSA Board of Directors:

- Wendy Ohst, Muskegon-Oceana Consortium

- Janet Bloomfield, Central Area Michigan Works!
- Paul Griffith, Michigan Works! West Central
- Beverly Drake, ACSET
- Sylvia Hopson, ACSET
- Fiona Hert, Grand Rapids Community College
- Jenny Kwast, Montcalm Community College
- Julie A. Coon, Ferris State University
- Lois Horstman, Retired, Heartland Home Health Care
- Tom Karel, Saint Mary's Health Care
- Carla Wallis, North Ottawa Community Hospital
- Lody Zwarensteyn, Alliance for Health
- Craig Nobbelin, Alliance for Health
- Win Irwin, ACSET WDB
- Susan Roeder

Strategies & Activities:

- Development of a regionally enhanced University of Michigan Skills Information Model (SIM).
- Utilize and share the DLEG Industry Sector Analysis report throughout the region
- Worker Sector Analysis - aligned with Element #5 Develop, Attract & Retain Talent
- Workforce Development Sector Analysis
- Individual Partner Organization Analysis

Responsibilities:

Leadership Team:

Conduct Stakeholder meetings to share technical assistance information provided by the DLEG and gather local information related to each of the components of the Sector Analysis.

Labor Market Analyst:

Provide a copy of the Industry Sector Analysis report to Region #5 Convener, Erin Kauth (Ottawa MWA) who will distribute the information to the Leadership Team and other representatives in the region.

Milestones & Timeframe:

See Project Timeline (Appendix B)

Status Notes:

Sector mapping is a work in progress and the Leadership Team will utilize the suggestions outlined in the DLEG Convener Tool Kit as a guideline and starting point.

Element 5: *Developing attracting and Retaining Talent*

Analysis and understanding of the current talent in the workforce and considering development and retention of talent in the region are equally important issues. Connectivity to business and to other innovation partners provides the ability for diversification outside of the traditional automotive industry defining our State, and necessitates interactive communication between education and business for communication of emerging opportunity.

Key Partners:

- Leadership Team (Appendix A)
- Wired Innovations: WM TEAM, WorkKeys®, Innovation Curriculum

Strategies & Activities:

- Engage in K-12 targeted events - i.e. ACT/WorkKeys®
- Participate in & support WM TEAM's WIRED & RSA employer consortium model retention & training pilot programming.
- Offer a workshop for employers regarding the WIRED Innovation Experience curriculum to expose employers to the opportunity to participate in a workshop that takes the learner through understanding some basic tools and processes for innovation. The workshop is foundational in nature and gives participants a better understanding of stage-gate process, strategy canvas, and value curves all in the context of generating, scoring, and shaping ideas. The curriculum was developed by Grand Rapids Community College and is expected to be a credentialed curriculum in 2009.
- Target Employers to participate in Innovation Experience pilot group
 - Initially - target three employees from each of three employers selected from each of Ottawa, Kent & Muskegon/Oceana Counties (27 people)
 - Longer term strategy - Each MWA dislocated worker program identify potential candidates to participate in the curriculum

Responsibilities:

Leadership Team:

Are responsible for overall aligning of relevant training, continued development of work progression models through interaction between agencies, business, education and community stakeholders and the alignment of funding streams. MWA, MEDC and post secondary representatives on the team will specifically target education opportunities, which present regional opportunities and provide a stream of communication for future workforce development. They will support and participate, with employers, in the development of strategy around innovation training pilots.

WIRED Innovations: WM TEAM, WorkKeys® & Innovation Curriculum:

Will develop strategy for pilot programs in training, developing and maintaining talent in the region through development of sustainable employer driven collaboration.

Milestones & Timeframe:

See Project Timeline (Appendix B)

Status Notes:

- Conversations regarding employer pilots with Innovation Curriculum have begun and continue to develop
- Members of the Leadership Team, GRCC and Muskegon CC representatives are currently engaged with WM TEAM WIRED and RSA work developing strategy to expand the Health Field Collaborative model regionally from Kent to Ottawa and Muskegon/Oceana. Development of strategy for regional expansion the SOURCE type manufacturing collaborative model is also underway. Continued conversations regarding specific supports from the MWA's, Workforce Development Boards as well as development of specific, targeted curriculum and training through the community colleges are planned.
- WorkKeys® forums addressing employer and K-12 providers have and will continue to occur and WorkKeys® assessments are embedded into the WM TEAM assessment suite to provide standardized assessment systems across pilots and regions.

Element 6: *Communications Strategy*

The core priority of the West Michigan regional plan would aim to communicate to build trusted relationships for introducing training curriculum program aspects which would, in turn, build trust for longer term engagement of solutions to strengthen the foundation for a competitive community. This communication of trust will provide the distinguishing characteristic of a fully thriving, as opposed to merely surviving, region.

Key Partners:

- Leadership Team (Appendix A)
- Community Champions (*Leadership West Michigan, Chamber Connections etc*)

Strategies & Activities:

- Imbed a consistent package of information contained in the training curriculum, including all aspects developed under the program, to create the link to the community employers.
- Highlight single point of contact calling plan to communicate resources and services available to the employer.
- Create deliberate opportunities for deliberate exchange of information
 - Stakeholder Quarterly Best Practice Meetings
 - Opportunities to consider what may be adopted from growing regions
- Create ONE simple message flow chart highlighting “access points” to distribute throughout the region

Responsibilities:

Leadership Team:

Are responsible for pursuing intense focus on opening lines of communication through proactive in-reach to employers through the direct communication of the program, and through finding community champion connections to present the opportunity for employers through our program. The Leadership Team also bear responsibility of continual aligning with WIRED and perhaps the “Cool Cities” initiatives (adapted to “Cool Regions”) as a means of marketing responsiveness to other innovative approaches addressing workforce development and as possible means of providing earnest intent and shared data and findings as we initially work to develop open communication.

They will develop the ONE simple “funnel flow chart” message for regional communication.

Community Partners:

As pursued and connected to the information via the Leadership Team, would present the training curriculum opportunities to employers.

Milestones & Timeframe:

See Project Timeline (Appendix B)

Status Notes:

- ONE Simple message “Funnel Flow Chart” concept for regional distribution is in the initial stage of development

Conclusion

Relationship, hearing the voice of all stakeholders and responding with tangible, aligned resources and services, is the core focus of the West Michigan regional plan. The strength of proactively marketing those resources and services through the programming outlined above is instrumental to developing the foundation of trust needed to engage the workforce and effect economic development. Transitioning the current mode of thought for a fresh approach to bridging the gaps in trust and resource strengthens the foundation for effective recognition of root needs in workforce and economic development as a solution based focus continues to develop through communication and action based on employer input. With a long term solution based approach, specific and relative issues preventing sustainable strength and growth of our regional economies will be honestly and collaboratively addressed. As we pilot this strength in relationship model, connecting and communicating with State assistance and innovations sharing the same intent, such as WIRED and the Cool Cities initiatives, our goal of success which can be broadly adapted is based on the fact that a firm foundation for workforce and economic development will be forged providing a solid and sustainable platform of success which has the ability to thrive in the global economy.

Leadership Team

- Erin Kauth, Program Supervisor, Ottawa County Michigan Works! Agency
- Bill Raymond, Director, Ottawa County Michigan Works! Agency
- Mary Kay Schoon, Program Supervisor, Ottawa County Michigan Works! Agency
- Dick deSpelder, Chair, Ottawa County Workforce Development Board
- Eric Packer, Ottawa County Workforce Development Board, Grand Valley State University
- Keri McCarthy, Ottawa County Workforce Development Board, Manpower, Inc.
- Sylvia Hopson, Associate Director, ACSET (Kent/Allegan) Michigan Works!
- Maureen Downer, ACSET (Kent/Allegan) Michigan Works!
- Ed Reed, Account Manager, Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Nancy Manglos, The Chamber - Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg
- Phil Rios, Project Manager, WIRED West Michigan
- Erin Kenny, Quality Services Manager, Muskegon / Oceana Michigan Works!
- Pat Ostradick, Thompson M-TEC (Ottawa county)
- Val Putnum, Thompson M-TEC (Ottawa County)
- Dan Clark, Grand Rapids Community College - Lakeshore Campus
- Connie Bellows, The Delta Strategy / WM TEAM
- James Vanderhulst, The Delta Strategy / WM TEAM
- Ashleigh Emmerson, The Delata Strategy / WM TEAM

Appendix B

21st Century - Developing a Coordinated Regional Strategies : West Michigan Regional Planning Initiative														
TASKS	May-07	Jun-07	Jul-07	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08	Apr-08	May-08	Jun-08
Program:														
Develop Full Leadership Team	X	X	X											
Develop Training Curriculum	X	X	X											
Implement Curriculum				begin										
Quarterly Meetings				X			X			X			X	
Staff Exchange Days					X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Regional Training Opportunities				X	X continue									
Develop Contact Tracking Website	X	X	X											

Utilize and Communicate Asset Map	X	X	X											
Workforce & Economy Analysis	X	X	X											
Compilation & Circulation of Analysis Information				X										
Implement Standardized Assessment Suite	begin													
WorkKeys	X continue													
WM TEAM Comprehensive Suite									X continue					
Regionally Enhanced UofM SIM				X	X	X								

Community Link: Communication:														
Develop ONE simple message funnel flow chart for stakeholders	X	X	X	continue updates										

Solution:														
Gather RR Protocol & Script Information & Communicate	X													
Develop Informational Resource Information to leave with employers														
Identify Core Response Teams		X	X											

Core Response Learning Forums				Begin & continue										
Participate in & Support WM TEAM Collaborative Program Pilot Development & Implementation	X continue									Embed sustainable into program				
Hold Innovation Curriculum Workshop for Employers														
Engage Employers in & Support Innovation Curriculum Collaborative Pilot							X			X				